



AmeriCorps Farm to School Partner-Site Deadline Approaching

Release Date: April 4, 2011

Contact: Ashley Huibregtse, 608-224-5002

MADISON – The deadline is approaching to apply to be a partner-site for the AmeriCorps Farm to School program. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is accepting applications until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 15, 2011.

AmeriCorps Farm to School works to decrease childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating habits in students K-12 and increasing access to local foods in schools. DATCP manages the AmeriCorps Farm to School program; providing support, technical assistance, and training.

Since 2008, DATCP's AmeriCorps Farm to School has worked with 10 partner-sites, placing 20 service members and serving over 10,000 students across Wisconsin. The Viroqua School District is completing its third year as a partner-site. Marilyn Volden, Viroqua's Food Service Director, describes how AmeriCorps Farm to School allowed the district to build connections in the community and overcome hurdles in accessing and using local foods.

"The AmeriCorps Farm to School program has brought the school and community together," said Volden. "Students are learning about where their food comes from through classroom lessons, trying new local foods at lunch, and going home to encourage their families to do the same at dinner."

A partner-site may be a school, school district, group of schools or districts, non-profit organization, state agency, or university. Partner-sites must specifically outline the schools that they will serve and have a letter of support from those schools. Partner-sites will need to meet certain requirements to be considered.

As a partner-site, recipients will receive a minimum of two half-time AmeriCorps members to do community outreach and nutrition education. In anticipation of receiving funding, new partner-sites would begin on August 15, 2011.

"The AmeriCorps members are outstanding and are a face to the program for students, school staff, and parents," explains Volden. "I encourage others to be part of AmeriCorps Farm to School as it teaches students valuable lessons about health and wellness. The program has a potential to boost a district to the next level."

Application materials and information are at datcp.wisconsin.gov, search "Farm to School." For questions, contact Camilla Vargas, Program Manager, at camilla.vargas@wisconsin.gov or 608-224-5017.

###